The Cambridge Program



Program History:

The Cambridge Program began over 35 years ago in Cambridge, MA, with the support of the Cambridge Recreation Department. Yearly events were set up in parks and gymnasiums specifically for physically and mentally challenged individuals. As 'mainstreaming' and integration were emerging in schools, the Recreation Department began holding events that catered to all individuals, regardless of mental or physical challenge, race, color, or religion. Over 30 years ago, the program became Camp Rainbow, and offered various programs on Saturdays for teens and adults with disabilities. In 1994, the program changed its name to stress the 'person', rather than his or her disability, and became The Cambridge Program for Individuals with Special Needs. In 2007, the program once again changed its name to simply The Cambridge Program, with the motto: "Helping Turn Disabilities into Capabilities."

Program Statement:

The Cambridge Program is designed to enhance the lives of its participants by providing quality programs that are geared to promote self-esteem, encourage social interaction, and increase physical well-being. Its goal is to help create for individuals with a range of needs an empathetic community through programs and activities that promote health and fitness, care, respect, and understanding differences.

The Clients:

There is a very diverse population of male and female clients with a range of disabilities, including intellectually challenged, developmental delays, emotional and behavioral challenges, traumatic post stress syndrome, and clients within the autism spectrum. Clients range from as young as 6 years old to as old as 60 years old, and come from a range of social economic backgrounds.

The Staff:

The Cambridge Program staff is made up of a variety of special educators, teachers, a health care consultant, counselors, college students, and several volunteers. The staff are a team and work collaboratively to ensure a safe, positive quality program.

Location:

The Cambridge Program is located in the Sheila Russell Youth and Community Center at 680 Huron Avenue in Cambridge, MA. The fully handicapped accessible building is located across from the entrance of the Fresh Pond Golf Course and is situated in a quiet neighborhood with basketball and tennis courts within walking distance. The facility is equipped with classrooms, offices, a gym, game room, weight room, a dance hall, and a full kitchen. The program has weekly access to the War Memorial Pool located at Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School at 1640 Cambridge Street every Saturday from 9:00-10:30am.